



## **WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

### **RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY**

**Date ratified: 8 May 2017**

**Ratified by: CURRICULUM, STAFF AND PUPILS COMMITTEE**

**Date to be reviewed: May 2019**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

At Westfield we believe that pupils need to be safe, to know how to behave and to know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. Only for a very small minority of pupils will the use of physical intervention be needed. On such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.

The majority of pupils behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. We have responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class, and individual pupils.

All school staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might be communicating. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

## 2. DEFINITION OF “RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION”

“Restrictive Physical Intervention” is the term used to describe interventions where bodily contact using force is used to control or manage a child’s behaviour. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to use “reasonable force” to control or restrain pupils in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria:

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence (*this applies even if the child is below the age of criminal responsibility*)
- To prevent a child from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property (*including the child’s own property*)
- To stop the child from engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to maintaining the good order and discipline at the school.

There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it;
- the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices (eg splints on the pupil prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self-injury), forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

### **3. WHEN THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS MAY BE APPROPRIATE**

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However there are other situations when physical handling may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain pupils may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

### **WHO MAY USE RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION**

All staff are authorised by the Headteacher to have control of pupils, and **must** be aware of this Policy and its implications. However, if the Head has lawfully placed an adult in charge of children who is not a member of staff then that adult will be entitled to use restrictive physical intervention if they can demonstrate it was reasonable and proportionate.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other pupils and themselves from risky situations may be the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the pupils.

### **4. PLANNING FOR THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS**

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows:-

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its use are met
- staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the pupil's and/or other pupil's best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion. The pupil will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Restrictive Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the unacceptable behaviour
- only the minimum force necessary will be used
- staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response incident
- every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses
- as soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control

- a distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy
- escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- the age, understanding and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account
- in developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance
- procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

## 5. ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF INTERVENTION

- There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, for example:
  - ❑ to comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age);
  - ❑ to gently direct a pupil;
  - ❑ for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc);
  - ❑ in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils;
  - ❑ in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted.
- In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider the following:
  - ❑ the pupil's age and level of understanding;
  - ❑ the pupil's individual characteristics and history;
  - ❑ the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present).

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil. (Should a pupil appear to **enjoy** physical contact this must not be sought via Restrictive Physical Intervention.)

## 6. DEVELOPING A POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Risk Assessment Management Plan (RAMP) will be completed. This Plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing. The RAMP will include:-

- ❑ involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- ❑ a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- ❑ a **record** to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- ❑ Techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used
- ❑ identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil
- ❑ ensuring a system to summon additional support
- ❑ identifying training needs

## 7. GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR STAFF

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. At Westfield this is arranged for all staff at a number of levels including:-

- awareness of issues for governors, staff and parents,
- behaviour management techniques for all staff
- managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff

Training in practical techniques of physical intervention may be required for staff where there is a significant likelihood of them needing to intervene physically due to the nature of the pupil (or pupils) that they are working with. Where there is an identified need for such training, staff will be trained by an approved instructor. *(NB there is no legal requirement for staff to be trained in the use of practical techniques so staff may exercise their legal right to physically intervene even if they have not had such training. However, they would still need to demonstrate that their intervention was reasonable and proportionate).*

## 8. COMPLAINTS

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we can avoid the need for complaints. All disputes which arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.